THE ELOGY OF NOTHING,

DEDICATED TO

NOBODY;

WITH A

POSTFACE.

By T. TRIFLER, Esq;
Of the Middle Temple.

Iham ut fortè vid ſtratâ, ſicut meus eſt mos,
Neſcio quid meditans nugarum, totus in illis:
NIL mihi in mentem venit.

Hor. Lib. I. Serm. 9.

LONDON,

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BRITISH MUSEUM

THE DEDICATION TO NOBODY.

THE Generality of Authors dedicate their Lucubrations, either to ſome Perſon of eminent Rank and Fortune, whoſe Protection and Liberality they ſtand in need of; or elſe to ſome amiable Nymph, whoſe Favours or Affections they ſolicit; or laſtly to ſome Friend, whoſe real or imaginary Parts, Learning and Merit they celebrate, in order to have the Compliment returned them. The comical *Scaron* has dedicated one of his Works to a Bitch; and the ſatyrical *Furetiere* one of his to the Executioner: But I, wiſer or not, as the judicious Reader ſhall pleaſe to determine, according to the juſt Right he

acquires by purchaſing this; ſhall dedicate my *Elogy* of *Nothing* to *Nobody*. But as many cenſorious Criticks, who are pleaſed with nothing but their own Inventions, may find Fault with this Dedication, and imagine me a ſilly Fellow, ignorant of my own Intereſt, becauſe I chooſe to dedicate this Elogy of *Nothing* to *Nobody*, rather than to a Perſon of Quality; I do, to obviate their Objections, beg leave to aſſure them, that I expect, and deſire *Nothing* for the Fruit of my Labour, and that *Nobody* without being asked, generouſly offered to patronize it. 'Tis true, perhaps if I had, at all Events, heroized a Perſon of Quality in my Dedication; he might have preſented me with a, *Sir I am infinitely obliged to you*, finely articulated, a genteel Bow, or a polite Squeeze of the Hand; or a Nymph, whoſe Charms and Merit I ſhould have celebrated in the Front of my Work, might have returned me a Lye for my Lye,

and

and Flattery for Flattery. However, to ſpeak the Truth, according to my uncommendable Cuſtom, I had as leave have *Nobody*'s *Nothing*, as the fine Complements and fruitleſs Careſſes of a Perſon of Quality; and according to the Conſtitution which Dame Nature has given me, a fine *Nothing*, and the moſt agreeable Smiles and flattering Hopes of the fair *Chloe* or *Cælia*, are to me pretty much alike. Beſides, if my Readers knew the ſincere Friendſhip which has long ſubſiſted between me and *Nobody*, and the great Obligations I have to *Nobody*; they muſt own, that I am in Gratitude obliged to honour *Nobody* with this Dedication. When intoxicated with the Vanity of raiſing my ſelf a Reputation in the Republick of Letters, I left my peaceful abode in the Country, and came to *London*, the Seat of Hurry and Confuſion; do they know who, upon my Arrival, viſited me, honoured me with their Friendſhip and made

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me Offers of their Service? *Nobody.* Are they curious to know who aſſiſted me in my Neceſſities, and comforted me when ſick or under Misfortunes? *Nobody.* Who invited me to his Table, or lent me Money? *Nobody.* To whom then, Gentlemen, have I greater Obligations, than to *Nobody?* Beſides, *Nobody* has not only merited my Eſteem and ſincere Friendſhip, for the Reaſons I have already mentioned; but I will venture to aſſert againſt the whole World, that you will find in *Nobody*, all that is requiſite to conſtitute the moſt diſtinguiſhed Merit. If I ſhould ask, who is perfectly temperate in the greateſt Plenty; entirely humble, when dignified with the higheſt Honours; ſcrupulouſly chaſte, amidſt the moſt tempting Charms of the fair Sex; and intrepid in the greateſt Dangers? Would not the Anſwer be, without Heſitation, *Nobody?* Who do we ſee now-a-days patronize Learning and learned Men? *Nobody.*

Who

Who does good to all the World, even to their greateſt Enemies? *Nobody.* Who is abſolutely void of Ambition and Avarice? *Nobody.* Who vindicates the oppreſſed, or ſerves his Country without ſelfiſh Views? *Nobody.* Who can ſay, that he never injured his Neighbour in Thought, Word or Deed? *Nobody.* Who is more eloquent than *Demoſthenes* or *Cicero*; a better Poet than *Homer* or *Virgil*; a better Hiſtorian than *Livy*; more elevated than *Horace* in his Odes, or more touching than *Ovid* in his Elegies? *Nobody.* Who is wiſer than *Solomon*, ſtronger than *Sampſon*, braver than *Alexander*, or has greater Talents than *Cæſar*? *Nobody.* In a Word, who has all the Accompliſhments and Virtues neceſſary to conſtitute a perfectly great and good Man, without any the leaſt Defect? *Nobody.* Can any Man then, of common Senſe, be ſurprized that I ſhould dedicate my Elogy of *Nothing* to *Nobody*? I think, without any Re-

gard

gard either to the Merit of my Patron, or the great Obligations I have to him; that *Nobody* is the propereſt Patron for an Elogy upon *Nothing*, becauſe *Nobody* ſeems to be made expreſly for *Nothing*. This, I hope, will entirely ſatisfy the moſt critical Reader, that I have juſt Reaſon to dedicate this Elogy to *Nobody*; and therefore ſhall conclude my Dedication, with begging *Nobody*'s Pardon for its Tediouſneſs, and declaring that I do with the greateſt Sincerity, ſubſcribe my ſelf,

The

moſt obliged,

moſt obedient,

and moſt humble

Servant, of

NOBODY.

THE ELOGY OF NOTHING.

HOMER, the firſt of the *Greek* Poets, has celebrated the Battle of the Frogs and Mice; and *Virgil*, the Prince of the *Latin* Poets, has immortalized a Gnat. *Ovid*, has writ the Elogy of the Flea; *Lucian*, of the Fly; *Agrippa*, *Melancthon*, and ſeveral others, that of the Aſs. *Plato* and *Carneades*, have writ in Praiſe of Injuſtice; *Eraſmus*, of Folly; *Stephen Guazzy*, of a paraſitical Life; *John Fabricius*, of Beggary; *Ulrich Hutten*, of the Fever; *Jerom Fracaſtor*, of the Winter; *Stephen Dolet*, of old Age; *Douza*, of the Shade; *Elias Major*, of Lying; and I, Gentlemen, undertake to write in Praiſe of NOTHING. You will ſay, perhaps, what a ſenſeleſs Au-

thor is this? Whoever took it into his Head to write upon *Nothing?* But pray, Gentlemen, reflect; is it not better to write upon *Nothing*, than to write Memoirs, like the D—ſs of *M—l—h*; Comedy, like my L--d *Gr--ſt--ne*; Politicks, or Poetry, like my L--d *H-r-ey*; Criticiſms like Dr. *B---ley*; Theories of the Earth, like Dr. *Burnet*; fulſome Dedications, like Dr. *M--dl-n*; Funeral Elogies like Dr. *Cl---ke*; inſipid proſaic Odes, like *C--ber*; and Travels, like *&c. &c.?* Nay, I will not only affirm, that 'tis better to write upon *Nothing*, than to write ſuch dangerous Romances, crude Syſtems of Politicks and baudy Pamphlets, as the Preſs is now ſtuffed with; but will venture to ſay, that of all material Objects, *Nothing* has ſuch an intrinſick Excellence, as juſtly to deſerve the higheſt Praiſe and Commendations of all wiſe Men. If we inquire into the Antiquity of *Nothing*, we ſhall find, that *Nothing* exiſted with the Divine Being, before the Angels and World were created. Nay, I will aſſert, without fearing the Imputation of Blaſphemy, that *Nothing* exiſted before the Divine Being, and that *Nothing*

is

is ſuperior to him. *Nothing*, like the Deity, can only be defined by itſelf; what is *Nothing*? *Nothing*. *Nothing* alſo, can only be compared to itſelf; what will you compare *Nothing* to? Certainly *Nothing*. *Nothing* is immenſe, incomprehenſible, immaterial, indiviſible, always conſtant, always uniform, always itſelf, fertil in Sterility, ſteril in Fertility, and is extended beyond all Things. *Nothing* can neither be augmented or diminiſhed; add *Nothing* to *Nothing*, it makes *Nothing*; take *Nothing* from *Nothing*, there remains *Nothing*. *Nothing* never had Beginning, or will have End; but the whole World was created out of *Nothing*, and will return to *Nothing*. The Sun, the Moon and Stars, the fruitful Plains, verdant Meadows, murmuring Fountains and ſhady Woods; the Mountains, Seas, Lakes and Rivers; the moſt pretious Metals and valuable Jewels, were all created out of *Nothing*. The ſucculent Meats and ſweet Fruits, which we eat with ſo much greedineſs; the delicious Wines and Liquors, which we drink with ſo much Pleaſure; the harmonious Sounds which charm our Ears; the delightful Pro-

ſpects which raviſh our Eyes; and the agreeable Smells which pleaſe our Noſtrils; all come originally from *Nothing*. Nay more, the moſt formidable Princes, the moſt illuſtrious Commanders, the ableſt Stateſmen, the moſt pious Divines, the skilfulleſt Phyſicians, the honeſteſt Lawyers, the moſt learned Mathematicians, Poets and Philoſophers, the enchanting Beauties which we careſs with ſo much Pleaſure, the faithful Friends, whoſe Society is ſo agreeable; and laſtly, all the moſt eminent and virtuous of both Sexes, are lineally deſcended from *Nothing*. What ſhall I ſay more? Our Soul itſelf, that glorious Portion of the Divinity, which ſo advantageouſly diſtinguiſhes us from the Beaſts, is formed out of *Nothing*.

If we conſider the Power of *Nothing*, we ſhall find that *Nothing* is infinitely more Powerful than the omnipotent Deity; for *Nothing* can change the Nature of the unchangeable Divine Being: Nay, the Deity is afraid of *Nothing*. *Nothing* can make that, which never has been, to have been; that which is, not to be; and that to be,

which

which never ſhall be. *Nothing* can make Virtue, Vice; or Vice, Virtue. *Nothing* can make a mortal and fallible Man, both immortal and infallible. *Nothing* can make the moſt perfidious and ambitious Princes, ſcrupulouſly obſerve their Treaties, when 'tis their Intereſt to break them. *Nothing* can make the beſt and moſt religious Princes violate their moſt ſolemn Treaties, and ſquander away the Blood and Treaſure of their Subjects, to gratify their lawleſs Ambition, and acquire the vain Titles of *Great* or *Invincible*. *Nothing* can make the moſt vain and avaricious Miniſter, prefer the Service of the Publick, to the Favour of his Prince, or the Intereſt of his own Family. *Nothing* can make an ignorant Coward, a brave and experienced Commander; or a brave and experienced Commander, an ignorant Coward. *Nothing* can make the moſt orthodox Chriſtian an Atheiſt, while he continues to profeſs Chriſtianity; and a Jew, Turk or Pagan, an Orthodox Chriſtian, while he continues zealouſly bigotted to his own Faith. *Nothing* can make the trueſt Friend, betray his Friend; a Swiſs fight

without

without Pay, or a Fop and Coquet lay aſide Self-love and Affectation. *Nothing* can make a Man practiſe all the moral Duties, and yet act contrary to them all at the ſame Time. Laſtly, *Nothing* can change the whole Order of Nature, while it continues invariably the ſame.

Let us next examine the Excellence of *Nothing*, and we muſt grant that *Nothing* is more excellent than Virtue or the divine Being. Of all ſublunary Things, *Nothing* is ſo excellent, *Nothing* is ſo deſirable, that a wiſe Man would riſque his Life, Health and Liberty to acquire it; or his Soul to preſerve it. O excellent *Nothing*! Happy the Man who is poſſeſſed of Thee! He enjoys a tranquille, unenvied State of Life, exempt from a Thouſand Fears and Cares, that diſtract the Thoughts, and diſturb the Sleep of the Rich. He is not uneaſy at the height of Taxes, but cheerfully contributes *Nothing*, his ineſtimable All, to the Support of the State, the Relief of the neceſſitous, or Service of his Friends. Rich in *Nothing*, he neither Fears the Chicanery of the Law,

Loſſes

Loſſes by Fire or Innundations, or leaſt his Fields or Cattle ſhould be injured by the Inclemency of the Seaſons. He runs no Riſque of an impatient Heir's abridging, by Poiſon or otherwiſe, a Life, already too ſhort; or of Theives lying in wait to rob him: But goes as unconcernedly, alone and unarmed, by Night or Day, through the thickeſt and moſt unfrequented Foreſts, as into the fulleſt Aſſembly; for how can he be robbed, who has *Nothing* with him? We muſt then grant, that all thoſe, whom we politely call *Savages*, becauſe poſſeſſed of *Nothing*; are the happieſt People in the World: And would we but lay aſide our Deſires of getting *Something*, we ſhould all be equally happy; for we brought *Nothing* into this World with us, and ſhall carry *Nothing* out of it.

As *Nothing* is more excellent than the divine Being, ſo *Nothing* is more perfect; nay, *Nothing* is infinitely more perfect than Perfection itſelf: And I think it requires no extraordinary Extent of Genius, to find that *Nothing* can exceed itſelf; which if our nice

Criticks

Criticks had maturely conſidered; they would not have cenſured my ingenious Friend **Cibber*'s elegantly *expreſſive Expreſſion*, in his Elogy of the celebrated Mrs. *Oldfield*; *That ſhe out-did her uſual Outdoings*: For 'tis certain that Mrs. *Oldfield* came originally from *Nothing*; and according to the known Axiom in Phyſicks, †*ex nihilo nihil fit*, muſt be *Nothing*; and conſequently might exceed herſelf; becauſe *Nothing* can exceed itſelf.

The ſurpriſing and unconceivable Qualities of *Nothing*, equally excite our Admiration, and merit our Attention. What is more ſurpriſing, than that thoſe who are blind and deaf, ſhould ſee and hear *Nothing*, when they who enjoy the Senſes of Seeing and Hearing in the greateſt Perfection, cannot? And is it not equally ſurpriſing, that thoſe who have entirely loſt the Senſes of Smelling and Taſting, ſhould ſmell and taſte *Nothing* more

* As Flattery is inconſiſtent with true Friendſhip, I hope the candid Reader will not think that it has any Part in this Vindication of my ingenious Friend Mr. *Cibber*, or that it proceeds from the Deſire of a complemental Ode, on my Performance; but from a pure Regard to his fine Parts, Learning and Merit, which *Nothing* equals.

† From *Nothing*, comes *Nothing*.

perfectly

perfectly than thoſe that have them? Can we conceive how any Creature can ſee without Eyes, hear without Ears, ſpeak without a Voice, fly without Wings, or walk without Legs? *Nothing* can. *Nothing*, is without Colour and Shape; and yet we muſt own, that *Nothing* can be ſeen without Colour or Shape. Touch *Nothing*, and you will own, that *Nothing* can be touched without a Body. *Nothing* can be heard in the profoundeſt Silence, and even without being heard; ſeen, without being ſeen; and felt, without being felt. *Nothing* has the moſt contradictory Qualities, without having contradictory Qualities; as for example, *Nothing* is more amiable than God, and *Nothing* is more hateful than the Devil; *Nothing* is truer than the Goſpel, and *Nothing* is falſer than a Lye; *Nothing* is hotter than Fire, and *Nothing* is colder than Ice; *Nothing* is harder than the Adamant, and *Nothing* is more fluid than Water; *Nothing* is whiter than Snow, and *Nothing* is blacker than Jet; *Nothing* is heavier than Quickſilver, and *Nothing* is lighter than the Air; *Nothing* is ſweeter than Sugar, and *Nothing* is more

acid than Vitriol, or bitter than Aloes. I could enumerate an hundred other uncontradictory contradictory Qualities of *Nothing*, but to avoid Tediouſneſs, ſhall paſs them over, and conſider the many Benefits we receive from *Nothing*, which we cannot reflect on without being ſenſible of the great Obligations we have to it, and celebrating it's Praiſe.

What exempts us from all the Misfortunes of this Life, and even Death itſelf? *Nothing*. What enables us to ſee, when we are blind; to hear, when we are deaf; to ſpeak, when we are dumb, and to walk without Legs? *Nothing*. What makes us inſenſible of Hunger, Thirſt and Wearineſs, Cold and Heat, when we are moſt ſenſibly affected by them? *Nothing*. What makes us inſenſible of the moſt excruciating Pains of Body and Mind, when we are ſeverely tortured by both? *Nothing*. If we by any Accident entirely looſe our Senſes or Limbs, what reſtores them to us? *Nothing*. Would a Man do any thing that is impoſſible to be done? *Nothing* can enable him to do it. Would he fly to the Sun,

Moon,

Moon, or the remoteſt Stars; or would he live in the Fire, like a Salamander, or in the Water like a Fiſh? *Nothing* can enable him to fly without Wings, or live in the Fire or Water, without changing his Nature. Would he be perfect in all Languages, Arts and Sciences without Application? *Nothing* can make him ſo, without a Miracle. Would he viſit the moſt diſtant Parts of the Globe, and not ſtir out of his Chamber; or would he be in the *Weſt-Indies* and in *London*, at the ſame Inſtant of Time? *Nothing* can enable him to do the one, or be in both Places at the ſame Time. Or would he gratify his vicious Appetites and be virtuous at the ſame Time? *Nothing* can make him ſo. Theſe, and many other Impoſſibilities, *Nothing* can enable us to do; but above all, *Nothing* makes us perfectly happy in this Life; and *Nothing* will make us eternally happy in the next, without Faith and Morality.

Nothing is equally good in Proſe or in Verſe; in *Greek* or in *Latin*; in *French* or *Engliſh*; or in any Language whatſoever. What is there for Example, in *Greek* Poetry,

finer than the *Iliad* of *Homer*; or in *Latin*, than the *Georgicks* and *Eclogues* of *Virgil*? *Nothing* certainly, let the nice Moderns ſay what they will. What is there more eloquent in Proſe, than the Orations of *Demoſthenes* and *Tully*? *Nothing*. What is there better writ in *French*, than *Mr. de la Fontaine*'s Fables, or *Mr. de Fenelon's Telemachus*? *Nothing*. What is there in *Engliſh*, more ſublime than *Milton*'s *Paradiſe Loſt*, or more burleſque than *Hudibras*? *Nothing*. Or what is there in *Spaniſh* more diverting than the *Adventures* of *Don Quixote*? *Nothing*. Take a View of all the Arts, Sciences, Honours and Employs, and of every Thing that is rare in the vaſt Univerſe, and after mature Conſideration, you will find them to be *Nothing*. And that except *One Thing*, that all Things are to be accounted *Nothing*.

Nothing has a greater Influence upon our Lives and Actions, and can prevail on us to prepare for a future State, more than either the hope of eternal Happineſs or fear of eternal Miſery. *Nothing* can make us do our

Duty,

Duty, in our ſeveral Stations in this Life, more than the Hope or Fear of temporal Rewards and Puniſhments; for when Rewards and Puniſhments cannot, are we not obliged to own that *Nothing* can? *Nothing* can appeaſe the moſt implacable and cruel Tyrant; ſatisfy the Deſires of the moſt avaricious; daunt the moſt intrepid; pleaſe the moſt humourſome; or diſpleaſe the moſt good-natured. The avaricious Man values *Nothing* more than Gold; yet ſuch Influence has *Nothing* on his Mind, that tho' he refuſe you Gold, he will freely give you *Nothing*. *Nothing* ſatisfies our Deſires, without ſatisfying them; fills our Minds, without filling them; and excites our Paſſions, without exciting them. We cry for *Nothing*, we laugh for *Nothing*; we hope, we fear for *Nothing*: Nay, *Nothing* can make a wiſe Man hope for a Good, or fear an Evil, that never can happen. *Nothing* makes the guilty innocent, or the innocent, guilty. How often do we ſee the greateſt Men deprived of their employs for *Nothing*, and replaced by thoſe, who have leſs Merit than *Nothing*? How often have the moſt illuſtrious Aſſemblies been convoked

voked for *Nothing*, and their Deliberations terminated in *Nothing*? How often have we ſeen Armies raiſed, Camps formed, Fleets equipped, Embaſſadors ſent, and Treaties made for *Nothing*? What Quarrels and Diſputes do we daily ſee and hear about *Nothing*? The moſt intimate Friends and tender Lovers, often quarrel for *Nothing*; the moſt learned Men, often diſpute about *Nothing*. The Courtiers, Stateſmen, Soldiers and Philoſophers, are they not continually taking Pains and diſquieting themſelves for *Nothing*? Are not the envious and ambitious continually tormenting both themſelves and others for *Nothing*? *Nothing* is more deſirable than Meat, to the hungry; Drink, to the thirſty; Reſt, to the weary; Health, to the Sick; Sight, to the Blind; Hearing, to the Deaf; Liberty, to the Priſoner; a Pardon, to the condemned; Honours, to the Ambitious; Money, to the covetous; War, to the Soldier; Trade, to the Merchant; Learning and Virtue, to Men of Senſe; mutual Love, to Lovers; or the amorous Sighs of a languiſhing Lover, to a Coquet. What is the moſt extended Empire, compared to the vaſt Univerſe?

verſe? *Nothing.* Can we then wonder that Princes are deſirous to extend their Dominions? What are all earthly Honours and Dignities? *Nothing.* Are we then ſurpriſed that Mankind neglect the Enjoyment of Life, in Purſuit of them? Or what are Pleaſures, Dreſs and exterior Ornaments? *Nothing.* Is it not natural then for Mankind to be fond of them? What are more valuable in a Man, than good Parts, Learning, Merit and Virtue? *Nothing.* Can we wonder then that they are eſteemed as highly as *Nothing*, not only in the Courts of Princes, but by Mankind in general? The Beginning, Progreſs and Concluſion of all our Vanities, is *Nothing*; and the Duration of the longeſt Life, compared to Eternity, *Nothing.*

'Tis a common Obſervation, that it coſts us much Time and Labour, to acquire any Thing that is valuable; what then is more valuable than *Nothing?* Since we acquire *Nothing*, but with great Labour; ſince we obtain *Nothing* but after long Solicitation; ſince we learn *Nothing*, but by Application and Study; ſince in all Arts and Sciences whatever,

whatever, we know *Nothing*, but after tedious Reſearches and long Speculation; and laſtly, ſince we poor Mortals can obtain *Nothing* of Heaven or Earth, but by the Force of Prayers and Labour.

What can teſtify a nobler Mind, than the granting *Nothing* to our own Paſſions, and ſerving our Friends on all Occaſions for *Nothing?* No Paſſion pleaſes a noble Soul, like that, which is profeſſed with Conſtancy, and deſires the beloved Object to promiſe and grant *Nothing*, but what is agreeable to it. What different Effects *Something* and *Nothing* produce in the Minds of Men; all People freely give *Nothing*, few People care to give *Something*; all People ſee with Pleaſure, and are obliged to thoſe, who ſerve and amuſe them for *Nothing*; moſt People think themſelves not obliged to, and ſtudiouſly avoid thoſe, who continually ask *Something* for their Services.

Who can be ſaid to be perfectly happy? Certainly the Man who deſires and wants *Nothing*. When the City *Priene* was taken by

by the Enemy, and every Man fled with his moſt valuable Effects; what did the Philoſopher *Bias* take with him, when he anſwered thoſe who asked him, why he took *Nothing*, * *Omnia mea mecum porto?* Certainly *Nothing*; and yet with only *Nothing*, was the moſt contented and happy Man living. And what an egregious Miſtake are the generality of Mankind guilty of, who think him the wiſeſt Man, that is ignorant of *Nothing*; when † *Socrates* who only profeſſed to know *Nothing*, was by the *Delphick* Oracle pronounced the wiſeſt Man?

As thoſe are the happieſt, who want *Nothing*, and thoſe the wiſeſt who know *Nothing*; ſo we muſt grant that thoſe are the moſt ingenious, who have the rare Talent of living and making a Figure with *Nothing*, as many Gentlemen in this City do; that thoſe are the braveſt, who fear *Nothing*; and thoſe the moſt prudent, who are diſturbed by *Nothing*. And here again I muſt beg leave to remark ſome other vulgar Errors: Is there

* I carry all my Effects with me.

† *Hoc unum ſcio, quod nihil ſcio.*

any Thing in this World more precious than Gold, Silver and Jewels? Certainly *Nothing* is. Why then is the Man ſaid to be poor, who has *Nothing*; or lucky, who looſes *Nothing*? Is there any Thing more eſteemable than Virtue, or more amiable than true Merit? *Nothing*. Why then is the Man ſaid to be the moſt agreeable, who is diſpleaſed with *Nothing*; the moſt complaiſant, who finds Fault with *Nothing*; or with what Propriety can he be termed a worthleſs Fellow, who is good for *Nothing*? And if *Nothing* is more deſirable than an Imperial Diadem in this World, and eternal Happineſs, in the next; why is the Man thought miſerable, who hopes for *Nothing*, either in this World or the next?

I will add, to what I have ſaid in praiſe of *Nothing*; that every Man would think that the beſt Country in the World, where he could have a fine Houſe and large Eſtate for *Nothing*; where he could eat the moſt delicate Meats, drink the moſt exquiſite Wines, have the fineſt Clothes, and be ſerved and amuſed for *Nothing*. I may add, that the

greateſt

greateſt Part of our Poets and Writers, would be much more eſteemed, if they wrote upon *Nothing*; that the principal Merit of moſt of our Orators, conſiſts in pompous Expreſſions, that mean *Nothing*; that all fine Gentlemen and Ladies, read *Nothing*, talk of *Nothing*, think of *Nothing*, do *Nothing*; that the greateſt Men are often amuſed with *Nothing*; that the Nymph is entertained by her Lover, with a thouſand tender *Nothings*; and that our moſt polite and diverting Converſations, are full of agreeable *Nothings*. I will further add, that *Nothing* is the Deiſt's God; and according to an old * *French* Poet, to ſee *Nothing* in ones Purſe is the Devil;

Un Charlatan diſoit en plein Marché
Qu'il montreroit le Diable, à tout le Monde.
Si n'y en eut, tant fût-il empêché,
Qui ne courût pour voir l'Eſprit immonde.
Lors une Bourſe aſſez large & profonde
Il leur déploye, & leur dit, Gens de bien,
Ouvrez vos Yeux, voyez, y at-il RIEN?
Non, dit quelq'un de plus près regardant.

* *Melin de S. Gelais.*

Et c'eſt, dit il, le Diable, oyez vous bien, Ouvrir ſa Bourſe, & y voir RIEN, *dedans.*

Tho' *Nothing* is a ſubject ſo copious, and its Merit ſo great, that I need not fear being tedious, while I entertain you with *Nothing*; I ſhall however, that I may not ſeem to act contrary to the favourite Maxim of *Cleobulus*, one of the ſeven Sages of *Greece*, *Ne quid nimis*, Too much of *Nothing*; conclude my Elogy with the following Story.

A Gentleman in the Reign of *Lewis* XI, came from one of the remoteſt Provinces of *France*, to Court, to beg a Favour of his Majeſty; and on his Arrival, addreſs'd himſelf to ſeveral of his Miniſters and Courtiers, who long amuſed him with ſpecious Promiſes: Tired however at length with their Remiſsneſs, he in Perſon preſents a Petition to his Majeſty; who having read it, wrote at the Bottom of it, *Nothing*. The Gentleman having received his Petition, and ſeen this, began with a loud Voice to praiſe the King, and invoke the Bleſſing of Heaven on him; which ſurpriſing his Majeſty, who over-heard him,

him, he ordered the Gentleman to be called to him, and asked him if he knew what he had writ at the Bottom of his Petition: The Gentleman aſſured his Majeſty, that he had not only read it, but returned him his moſt humble Thanks for it; adding, that if his Miniſters had told him as much, two Months before, it would have ſpared him much Trouble and Uneaſineſs, and he ſhould not have ſpent ſo much Money in purſuit of *Nothing*. *Lewis* pleaſed with the Gentleman's Repartee, immediately granted him the Favour he ſolicited.

The Favour I beg of you, Gentlemen, is to receive my *Nothing* favourably, which will not only lay me under an Obligation equal to *Nothing*, but may poſſibly very ſoon Occaſion another Edition of *Nothing*, reviſed, corrected and augmented with *Nothing*.

F I N I S.

THE *POSTFACE.*

THO' a Book without a Preface, makes as aukward a Figure, as a Beau without a Snuff-box; I have nevertheleſs ventured this without one; becauſe in my humble Opinion, all Books have more Occaſion of *Poſtfaces* than *Prefaces*. However, to obviate the Objections which I foreſee Criticks will make to this Innovation; I ſhall beg leave to tell them, I think *Prefaces* are either entirely uſeleſs; or elſe carry with them a juſt Suſpicion, of being calculated to prejudice the Reader and corrupt his Judgement. The Intention of *Prefaces* is, I preſume, either to explain ſome Paſſages which the Author thinks are obſcure, or elſe to anſwer the Objections, which he apprehends the critical Reader may make to the Work he preſents him with. But is it not highly ridiculous to explain the obſcure Paſſages, and anſwer the Objections which may be made to a Work, before one has read it, and conſequently

quently knows what it is? And does it not look like an Attempt to prejudice the Reader and corrupt his Judgment? Whereas, ſuppoſing a new Book to have been read with Attention, and examined with an unprejudiced Mind, the proper Place, for the Explanation of obſcure Paſſages, or Anſwer to the Objections which may be made to any Part of it; is certainly the latter End of the ſame Book: And the Diſcourſe containing the Explanation of obſcure Paſſages, or Anſwer to Objections; ought naturally to be called *Poſtface* and not *Preface*. After this Preliminary, which I think neceſſary for the Juſtification of my *Poſtface*; I ſhall beg leave to tell the learned and judicious Reader, what has induced me to write the Elogy of NOTHING. I have not only been long and intimately acquainted with *Nothing*, but have lived for many Years, tho' under the ſame Roof, in Amity and Friendſhip with *Nothing*. And tho' there are but few Gentlemen who can ſay, their Friends have not prevailed on them, at one Time or other, to accompany them in the Commiſſion of ſome favourite Vice, or at leaſt faſhionable Folly; I declare that *Nothing*

thing has never forced me to act against the Dictates of my Conscience, or quit the Character of an honest Man: And that in whatever Situation of Life, I may have been in, *Nothing* has never troubled the Tranquility of my Mind, or disturbed the Regularity of my Actions, which commonly tend to *Nothing*. Besides, I am naturally pleased with *Nothing*, and my greatest Amusement is to be either talking or doing of *Nothing*. These, Gentlemen, are some of the many Reasons, which have always made me, in all the Disputes and Quarrels which have happened on the Surface of this little Globe, which we inhabit, a zealous Partisan of *Nothing*. And as all modern Writers, to avoid the Suspicion of Flattery, take care to tell their Readers, the great Obligations they have to those, whose Elogies they write; I declare that my Gratitude to *Nothing*, and a Desire to do Justice to the Merit of *Nothing*, have been the only Motives to this Elogy.

Gentlemen,

Your very humble Servant,

T. TRIFLER.